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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 11 June 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

I am compelled to write to you once again, for the eleventh week in a row, to draw your attention to the ongoing critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and, more specifically, to the grave reality that continues to be faced by Palestinian civilians under Israel's military occupation.

Civilian casualties continue to be directly caused by the illegal policies and practices of the occupying Power, further traumatizing the population. On 6 June, Israeli occupying forces shot and killed 21-year-old Izz al-Din al-Tamimi, in the village of Nabi Salih, north-west of Ramallah. The youth was shot at close range with three bullets, one of them to the neck, even as he posed no direct or immediate threat to the soldiers. When Palestinian medics attempted to rescue him, Israeli forces prevented them from doing so and left Izz al-Din to bleed to death for over 30 minutes before an ambulance was allowed to arrive to carry his corpse.

What makes the killing of Izz al-Din al-Tamimi even more atrocious is that it was clearly premeditated. According to his mother, two days prior to the incident, soldiers had come to her house and told her, "we will kill your son and leave you crying". Like all Palestinians living under occupation, Izz al-Din's entire life was marked by daily violence, humiliation and oppression.

The al-Tamimi family is well known in the international arena for its peaceful activism against the Israeli occupation and its crimes against their village of Nabi Salih. Since 2009, the al-Tamimi family and villagers of Nabi Salih have carried out weekly peaceful protests against Israel's illegal wall, confiscation of land and settlement colonization. The village has been in the spotlight ever since Ahed al-Tamimi, age 16, was arrested by the occupying forces and sentenced to eight months in prison. Since then, Israeli forces have arrested and imprisoned 18 members of Ahed's direct and extended family, including six children, in a campaign of collective punishment against the village.

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The wilful killing of Izz al-Din al-Tamimi by Israel constitutes yet another crime in a pattern and long series of wilful killings of Palestinian civilians, including children, throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory. For this crime and all other crimes and violations perpetrated by the occupying Power against the Palestinian people, we call for full accountability.

In this regard, we must also draw your attention to the fact that casualties continue to mount in Gaza owing to Israel's ongoing aggression against peaceful Palestinian protesters. Last Friday, 8 June, the occupying Power continued its slaughter of unarmed Palestinian civilians participating in the "Great March of Return" in Gaza, bringing the total number of Palestinians killed since 30 March to 131, including 15 children. Last Friday was of particular significance to Palestinians, as it marked Jerusalem Day, a sombre commemoration of Israel's illegal annexation of East Jerusalem.

The names of those killed are Haitham al-Jamal, age 15; Ziad Jadallah Bureim, age 26; Imad Nabil Abu Darabi, age 26; and Yousef al-Fasih, age 29. Additionally, 618 protesters were wounded, more than 100 of them by live ammunition. Among those wounded were Mohammed Abdel al-Baba, a photographer for Agence France-Presse who was shot by live fire as he tried to photograph a wounded protester while wearing a press vest and helmet, and a 23-year-old man whose face was penetrated by a tear gas canister and images of whom were shared widely on social media, showing him with blood spattered on his face and shirt and clutching his throat as he struggled to breathe amid the tear gas.

The cruelty of these scenes and images was met not by condemnation from Israel, but, rather, by praise and, even more appallingly, incitement against Palestinians. Israeli Minister Avigdor Lieberman tweeted that "the determination and professionalism of IDF soldiers on the Gaza border prove themselves", while Israeli spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon described Palestinian protesters as "hateful morons" and "Hamas Jugend", the latter a play on "Hitler Youth" in German.

In this regard, we must again recall that Palestinian civilian protests against Israeli oppression are not new and that they constitute a popular initiative. Palestinians have been protesting against the unbearable conditions that they have been facing, not only since 30 March, but for decades. Palestinians, like all their other fellow human beings, are people who cannot endure decades of violent oppression, domination and control by the Israeli occupation forces without at least expressing their opposition to this in peaceful protest. It is not strange, but, rather, normal, that Palestinians would rise up to protest against the unbearable, inhumane conditions under which they have been forced to live.

As Israel persists in its wilful killing of Palestinian civilians and its callous disregard for human life, it is imperative that the international community act urgently to de-escalate the situation and prevent further assaults against Palestinian civilians. We therefore reiterate our call for the protection of the Palestinian people, for ensuring the safety and well-being of a defenceless civilian population being held captive under a more than half-century-long and a more than decade-long blockade.

In this regard, we welcome the upcoming resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly in view of the adoption of a resolution that would contribute to the efforts under way to defuse tensions, deter further violence against civilians and advance the serious consideration of measures to ensure the safety, well-being and protection of the Palestinian civilian population, beginning with a request to the Secretary-General to submit a report containing his proposals on ways and means towards this end, including, inter alia, recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism.

We appeal for the valuable and principled support of Member States for this important draft resolution, in line with their responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations, international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, relevant United Nations resolutions and the collective duty to protect civilians, including children, in situations of armed conflict, including this situation of foreign occupation.

Palestinians are looking to the international community for responsible and urgent action in the face of this crisis. A message should not be sent that their lives are dispensable, not worth the time of the international community, not worth protecting. It should be one that highlights the relevance of international tools to protect civilians in all circumstances and to preserve the prospects for a just peace.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 639 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 5 June 2018 (A/ES-10/785-S/2018/537), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations